

**Report from Chairman**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Abingdon Leisure Centre**

**Oxfordshire**

**26th October 2019**

1. Introduction

While I have great pleasure in presenting another very positive report to our members it is with also with great sadness with the recent passing of Amanda Kenny after a long battle with illness. Amanda was an integral part of GB Deaf Swimming for many years supporting Oliver in his swimming and supporting the club through her committee work. Our heartfelt prayers and thoughts go to her husband Nigel and their entire family. Amanda will be sorely missed.

Since our last AGM of March 2018 the club has continued to enjoy a very stable and successful period with everyone working together for the benefit of our club. Like every club we have swimmers and parents moving on resulting in changes in Executive and committee positions. I would like to thank Nigel seamarks for his time as secretary which ended in March of this year and am delighted that at that time Nigel agreed to continue to organise the club gala which is a huge benefit to us.

Since March, I and Paul Gotta our Treasurer have covered the secretary duties without disruption to the club while working towards a replacement for the position which hopefully will be confirmed from our AGM. Paul along with his wife Rebecca have been instrumental in the smooth running of the club over the last few years and I would like to truly thank them for their efforts. I would also like to thank Nigel Seamarks for his amazing work surrounding our gala and his continued support of GB Deaf Swimming and also our coaches and committee members for their time and efforts in making the club so enjoyable to be a part of over the period.

1. Membership

The club continues to thrive with a very strong membership (45) with the introduction of a single family fee being very successful. We continue to attract new members in both Category A and B with our younger age groups looking stronger than ever. We have introduced opportunities for senior swimmers who are not competing very much to continue to be an important part of the club while developing their own skills as poolside assistants or team managers. During the past year we have considered how best our club supports all deaf and hearing impaired swimmers and after an anomaly regarding children with a unilateral loss in their hearing. After extensive discussions with UKDS, Audiologists and other bodies it is felt that our constitution needed to be adjusted to incorporate unilateral loss and we believe we have managed to do this in a sensible and fair way which will be presented to the members at the AGM for their consent.

1. Training Weekends & National Gala

Our National gala weekend in both 2018 & March of this year were huge successes with almost all of our members being in attendance. We had the added excitement of a World record swim by Danielle Joyce in the 50 Fly in 2018 and this year the women’s 4 x 50 freestyle World record was set by Danielle, Shiona McClafferty, Lucy Sharp and Libby Gotta. In November we had another excellent training weekend this time at York University with again a great turn out from the members with costs of participation kept at an amazingly low price as is the case with this year’s weekend in Abingdon at just £20

1. European Championships 2018 and World Championships 2019

The 12th European Championships were held in Lublin, Poland in July 2018 with GB taking the opportunity to send 19 swimmers to the event, many competing at International level for the first time. In addition we were able to introduce support roles for senior swimmers who were no longer competing giving them valuable experience in assistant team manager and coaching roles. The team can be proud of their achievements which saw 82 personal bests and 5 GB records. Senior swimmer Jack McComish was our sole medal winner with 3 Bronze in the 50/100 Breaststroke and 50 Freestyle. While our medal haul was not as impressive as our Deaflympics performance the previous year it should be borne in mind we had a very young squad and due to the timing of the event the team were without Danielle Joyce our top female swimmer and multiple world record holder. The 5th World Championships were held in August this year in Sao Paulo, Brazil which proved to be impossible for our athletes to attend for many reasons not least of which was funding. We were delighted and proud though that we were represented by Nathan Young (20) who performed excellently with 6 events, setting 5 personal bests, reaching 4 finals and reserve in the other 2 finishing 5th in the 100 Freestyle were he broke the long standing English record in the heats and again in the final. The club would also like to extend their thanks to Nathans own strength and conditioning Coach Steve McQuilliam who attended Brazil with Nathan.

1. Records and Achievements

Our swimmers continue to amaze with the level of performance being raised each year. Since our last AGM we continue to rewrite the record books and I am proud to report include yet another World record for Danielle Joyce in the 50 Fly and a World record for our Women’s 4 x 50 Freestyle relay team of Danielle, Shiona McClafferty, Lucy Sharp & Libby Gotta

World Records 1 World Relay Records 1

National Records 11 National Youth Records 3

National Relay Records 5 National Youth Relay Records 1

English Records 32 Scottish Records 3

Cat A Age Group Records 58 Cat B Age Group Records 85

In addition we have had success in mainstream Regional championships and at galas all around the country with hundreds of personal best swims from our very youngest swimmer to our oldest. Many of our members have won local awards and continue to inspire so congratulations to everyone.

In November 2018 many of you attended the Deaf Sports Personality of the Year awards at the Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground to witness an amazing and unprecedented night for GB Deaf Swimming as our club won ‘Club of the Year’ Sam Chamberlain won ‘Coach of the Year’, Shiona McClafferty and Matt Oaten won a won ‘Special achievement award for under 18’s’ and Danielle Joyce won the top award of ‘Deaf Sports Personality of the Year’ A truly inspirational effort by our whole club.

1. UK Deaf Sport

Work continues behind the scenes with UKDS who support our club and continue to be our National governing body for Deaf International competitions. We continue to strive towards a fair system and opportunities for competition as well as funding for deaf swimmers. We look forward to continued recognition through UKDS and ultimately recognition with GB swimming.

1. Sponsorship

Sponsorship as always is something we need to keep the costs of our training weekends so low. We have been fortunate over the last 2 years to have had the support of my sister’s small cleaning company, DMG Floorcare Ltd who have given the club £2250. Please look at any opportunity to get funding into the club to benefit our swimmers and help us to provide training opportunities at the hugely reduced cost to you all that we currently enjoy.

1. Coaches

Sam Chamberlain stepped down as Head Coach this year to focus on other parts of his life and I would like to thank Sam and wish him well for his future. I am delighted that Martin Lee has stepped into the role and I hope he will carry this on following this year’s AGM along with Gina Dickson who has been assisting giving us a well-balanced coaching team.

1. Secondary Strobe Lights

After much campaigning by Paul & Rebecca Gotta and as a result of meetings with and through UKDS & swim England new rules were introduced on 1st September to ensure that all level 1 & 2 competitions must have a secondary starting light as part of their licence with all level 3 & 4 meets needing them by Jan 1st 2020. It is disappointing that only 57% of clubs had achieved this by 1st Sept. Swim England is continuing to work with them but this is a huge step in the right direction for equal starts and I cannot stress enough the importance of each of you making sure there are lights available for our swimmers at every meet you attend. We need to be heard in this regard for the benefit of every deaf swimmer. I encourage you to contact the club or UKDS if you are at a meet that does not have a secondary strobe available.

1. Development of our club

We continue to be committed to retaining swimmers by offering development opportunities which may as a result be of benefit to the club in the future. We are also committed to continuing to encourage Cat A members who we feel are a very important part of the club.

1. Finance

Paul Gotta has done a fantastic job in keeping the cost to everyone as low as possible while the club has still provided quality training venues and competition opportunities. We are in a good financial position as the report shows and our membership remains high.

1. Going Forward

We wish to continue to develop the amazing talent within the members through training weekends and our national gala by involving parents and senior swimmers in roles that ease the burden of running a club so please consider how you can help this.

14. Closing Remarks

It has been a privilege to be Chairman of the club for the last few years however the time has come for me to stand down from this role and I wish my successor every success, happy in the knowledge that we are a united team with great talent coming through for future Major competitions. I cannot name everyone but I would like to thank you all for your support, The executive, committee, welfare officers, coaches, team managers, poolside assistants, interpreters, parents but above all the swimmers who continue to inspire the next generations with their dedications and performances. I will continue to support the club in the background as records keeper and look forward to congratulating the swimmers on their amazing successes. Jim Joyce